

# ALASKAN TOKEN COLLECTOR

ALASKA RARE COINS, P.O. BOX 72832, FAIRBANKS, ALASKA 99707 Phone 907 452-6461 email: akcoins@mosquitonet.com

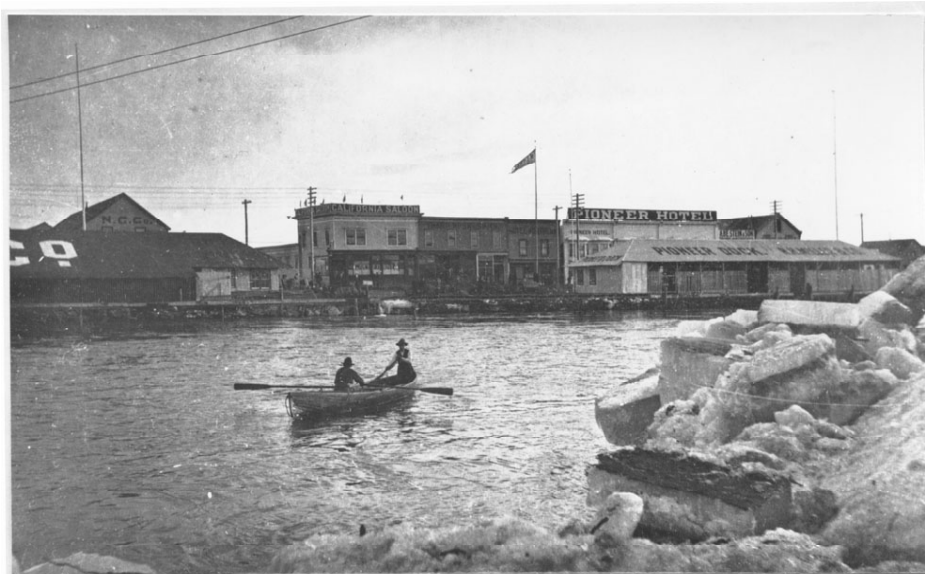
& POLAR NUMISMATIST

VOLUME XLI, NO. 1, JANUARY, 2019.



See page 7

## DIGGING CALIFORNIA



I must admit to considering dropping a few ancient Roman bronze coins into the excavations back in 1992. While I am sure the Archaeologists would not have been fooled, at least they might have had a good chuckle. According to the report, *"Historical Development of the Chena River Waterfront, Fairbanks, Alaska: an archaeological perspective,"* plans for the Barnette Street bridge began in 1978. The dig took place in 1992 and the bridge was built and finally opened in November of 2012, giving downtown Fairbanks two bridges (one north bound, the other south bound) across the Chena River. My memory tells me they were looking for Barnette's Cache.

The dig examined the area around First Ave. and Barnette Street, the riverbank on both sides of the river, and business area on the north side of the river that included Samson's Hardware and the Big I Bar (successor to the International Hotel, B-29).

One focus of the dig was the site of the California Saloon. Located on the southwest corner of First and Barnette (now a parking lot) and close to the original location of Barnette's Cache, it was the site of one of the earliest subdivided parcels in Fairbanks, and an early cabin. This became the site of the California Saloon.

The California was originally owned by Alfred White, who acquired the property from the Northern Commercial Co. July 3, 1905. He "flipped" it to Fred Martin on October 30. It is not known when Bill Koon became a partner, but he features prominently in their advertising. He sold his interest in the saloon to Fred Martin in 1912. Martin owned the California until 1915. Prohibition closed the saloon from 1918 to 1933. In 1923, Abe Stein purchased the building, then occupied by the Red White & Blue Cigar Store (B-49a). After prohibition, it became the Chena Bar, which burned in 1946.



The California Saloon was a social focal point in early Fairbanks. Depending on your social status, it was either "the place," or a den of inequity. The "Tanana Club" rented the upstairs. Reports of immoral and criminal activities brought demands that it be shut down. Among the complaints was one of "French women of the lowest description" at a party held at the Tanana Club.

continued on page 3

## EDITOR'S COMMENTS

I am as amazed as you are that this newsletter has survived 40 years, and now starting year 41. Subscriptions are down from years ago, but those remaining apparently think this is interesting and entertaining enough to send me a few bucks every year. And I benefit as much or more than you do. This makes me document everything I can and not rely on my memory.

How many more years can I do this? I now qualify for Medicare (never thought that would happen). I have to live longer than my father did to make it to 50 years. But that is the goal. 10 more years and I will quit. Maybe. But this also depends on the information available. If the quantity and/or the quality declines, then there is no point.

So keep those cards and letters coming. The more people that contribute information, the more interesting this newsletter will be over the next 10 years.

As usual, the January issue is a little late. Inventory must be done, and you are receiving this at the earliest possible time.

Thanks this month to Joe Usibelli, Dave Phillips, JW Terrill, Kaye Dethridge and Candy Waugaman.

eBay was relatively quite this month. I will start to list on eBay some really good Alaska tokens, some mediocre Alaska tokens and some non-Alaskan tokens. If you are an eBay, watch for them (beginning January 7, I hope).

\* \* \* \* \*

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Editor - Dick Hanscom

Associate Editor - Jerry Cleworth

Anchorage Correspondent - Ken Rieck

Canadian Correspondent - vacant

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## PRICES REALIZED

Selected prices realized from eBay:

<b>Bethel</b> , N.C. Co., "1", B-2c	33.00
<b>Cleary</b> , Willis & Welch, 25¢, B-5a	31.00
<b>Cordova</b> , Model Dispensary, 12½¢, holed B-26a	51.00
<b>Fairbanks</b> , Brown Derby, 5¢, B-10a	80.00OB
<b>Fairbanks</b> , Pioneer Hotel, 25¢, B-45c	93.79
<b>Gambier Bay</b> , Hoonah Pkg. Co., 5¢, B-1a	152.50
<b>Indian Mt.</b> , 708 NCO OM, 5¢, B-1aI	10.47
<b>Juneau</b> , Imperial Cigar Store, 6¼¢, B-29a	12.50
<b>Kasigluk</b> , 5¢ FST	11.26
<b>Ketchikan</b> , Katchikan Pharmacy, 5¢, B-22a	55.00
<b>Kodiak</b> , NOB, B-10b	23.17
<b>Kotzebue</b> , NCO Club A-go-go, 5¢, B-2a	8.50
<b>Latouche</b> , Sealey, \$1 gold nugget, B-3a	OB4,500.00NB
<b>McCarthy</b> , Gustave Priesner, 25¢, B-5c	168.05
<b>Murphy Dome</b> , NCO OM, 10¢, B-3c	7.00OB
<b>Nome</b> , Cape Nome Pharmacy, 6¼¢, B-12a	301.00
<b>Palmer</b> , ARRC, 1¢, B-1a	70.00
<b>Palmer</b> , Moose, 50¢, B-2a	25.00OB
<b>Petersburg</b> , George L. Cruz, 10¢, b-1b	OB250.00NB
<b>Platinum</b> , Alaska Traders, 50¢ & \$, B-1 b,c	103.50
<b>Shemya</b> , NCO OM, 5¢, B-2a	12.50
<b>Shemya</b> , NCO OM, 25¢, B-2e	15.05
<b>Sitka</b> , R. Witz, 5¢, B-17a	37.88
<b>Skagway</b> , Idaho Saloon, 10¢, B-14a	5.99OB
<b>Skagway</b> , Idaho Saloon, 10¢, B-14a	14.99OB
<b>Spring Creek (Prison)</b> , \$1	20.00OB
<b>Tonsina</b> , Nafsted, 12½¢, B-1a	45.00OB
<b>A.Y.P.E.</b> , encased cent, round	47.78

OB = Opening Bid; NB = No Bid; RL = relist; R = Reserve; RNM = Reserve Not Met; W = withdrawn BIN = Buy it now; BOA = Best Offer Accepted; DNS = Did Not Sell; FTR = see For the Record.

## STILL AVAILABLE!

2018 Price Realized: \$5 mailed; \$3 email PDF  
 1999-2018 Prices Realized: \$5 mailed; \$3 email PDF  
 40 year Index: \$20 mailed; \$15 email PDF

## 10 YEAR VOLUME UPDATE

I have printed and collated the previous 10 years. I am currently looking for a bindery. Hopefully by next issue I can advise you that things are progressing.

I will contact those who reserved a copy to confirm that you still want one.

I printed 10 copies. There are 3 still available. Price is to be determined based upon the cost of binding.

## CALIFORNIA, CONT.




Watch Fob, 39mm by 44mm, appears to be lead

In 1908, when the Tanana Club moved, the upstairs was remodeled and improved as the "California Club" - a place where men could play billiards and pool, cards, and read at their leisure. Bowling alleys and moving pictures were also available at the California.

Beginning in 1906, and at least until 1911, the California hosted Christmas dinner for those with no family or no place else to go.

The ads for the California are interesting in that a marten and raccoon came to be a substitute for the names of the owners. All in Fairbanks knew who Martin and Koon were.


**The California**



The days are getting colder,  
Old Winter's growing bolder,  
And it's no time to loiter on the street

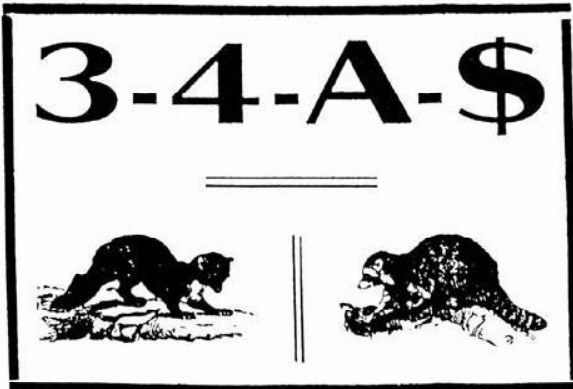
A warm room is a GOOD thing,  
There one escapes the cold's sting,  
And there finds prevention from "cold feet."

The oldest Tanana musher,  
Tho' he may be no "lusher,"  
Considers that warm quarters are a boon,  
So when he comes to Our Town  
He always wends his way down  
To the home of "The Marten and the Koon."



**CALIFORNIA**

MARTIN & KOON, PROPS.  
FAIRBANKS.



What were they selling "3 for a \$"?

Miners on the creeks often moved to town, or even went Outside for the winter. In the Fairbanks area, both Circle Hot Springs and Chena Hot Springs were popular over-wintering spots. One ad for the California invites (in poetic form) winter guests, and this was clearly appreciated by the "Gang in Winter Quarters" as shown on the gold match safe presented to F. A. Martin, Christmas, 1906." It is engraved with nine sets of initials (submitted by Joe Usibelli).



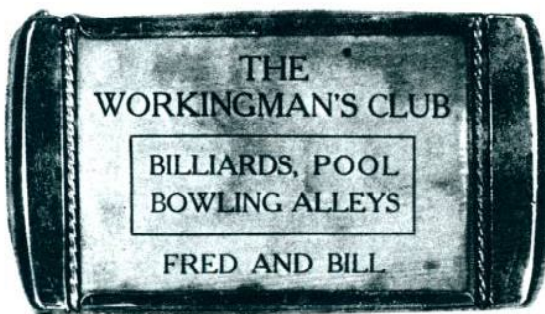
actual size



reduced



## CALIFORNIA, CONT.



Shown actual size

Bill and Fred advertised a match box (match safe) as a give away, perhaps influenced by the gold match safe presented to Fred in 1906.



Shown reduced. Actual size 116mm by 73mm  
(submitted by Joe Usibelli)

The California Saloon is known to Alaska token collectors because of its 25¢ token, and also scrip issued in conjunction with the Salchaket Trading Post in 1907/08.

Thousands of items were recovered, but only few of interest to Alaska token collectors. Those items shown are examples and not from the excavations.

Of course, a California token was found (only 1?). But a couple other tokens were found.



A pair of Northern Cigar Store tokens were found - 10¢ and 25¢ (B-40 a and b).

The International Hotel was across the river, and a 12½¢ token was found (B-29a). Pozza owned the International Hotel in 1923. It is currently the Big I(nternational) Bar.



## CALIFORNIA, CONT.



And "The Rose Cigar Co." (B-50a). We sold an example of this on eBay in December, the first to be offered. The example dug up is listed as "H.E. Rose Cigar Co." with no description of the reverse. From this description it probably was very corroded.



Finally, in the Northern Commercial Co. dock area, a celluloid baggage tag from the Northern Navigation Co. and a lead Canadian customs seal (similar to the one in our October auction) were found.

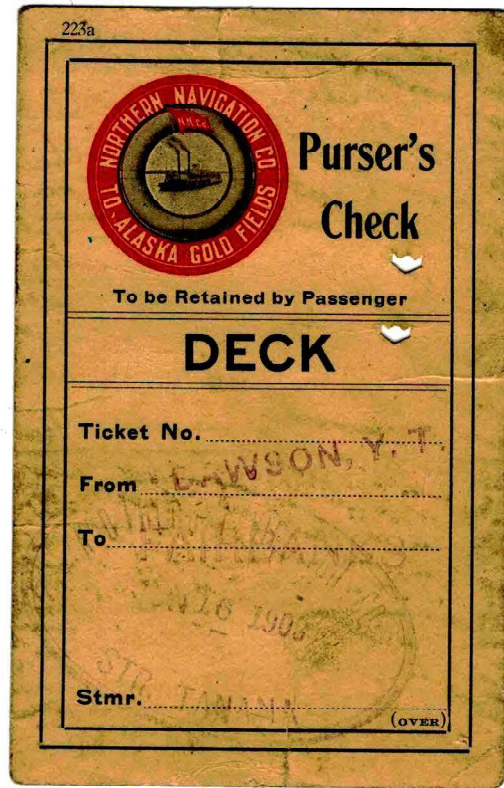
Most information in this article was obtained from "*Historical Development of the Chena River Waterfront, Fairbanks, Alaska: an archaeological perspective.*" Authors and investigators include, but are not limited to: Brian Gannon, Robert W. Weaver, Peter M. Bowers and William H. Adams.

To read the full report on line (without photos), go to [www.alaska.net/~nlur/barnproj/start.htm](http://www.alaska.net/~nlur/barnproj/start.htm).

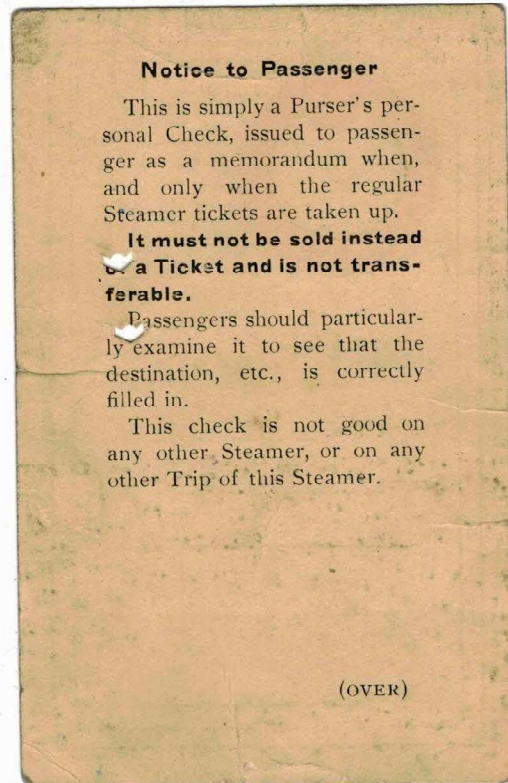
Just a neat jug we ran back in March/April, 2006 when it realized \$731 on ebay.



## N.N. CO./N.C. CO.



**PURSER'S CHECK:** And speaking of the Northern Navigation Co. (left column), we present this purser's check on the Steamer Tanana from Dawson to Fairbanks, June 16, 1909.



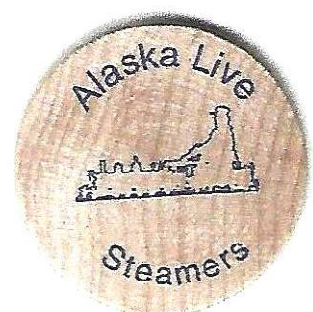
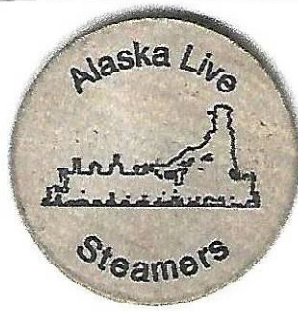


# MONEY TO BURN

by David Phillips



Two woods from Wasilla, Alaska have caught my attention. They are both from Alaska Live Steamers railroad. This is a volunteer run organization which operates a miniature railroad. It takes up to 20 people at a time, on a 45 minute ride through small villages, over trestles, through forests and even through a tunnel.



500 woods were produced in 2007, and are the standard 1½ inch (38mm) diameter. The color of the printing is black/black.

My thanks to the Executive Members I spoke with, for providing me with the above information.

Interestingly, there is another similar wood, but with a smaller logo and dark blue/dark blue (above right).

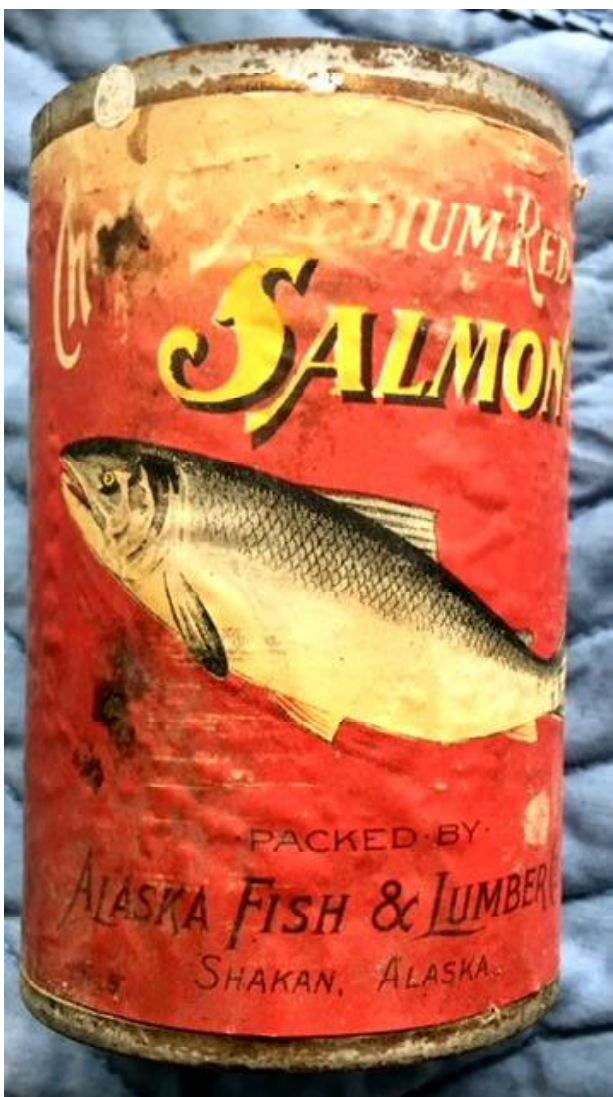
Both woods are used as “tickets” for a train ride. They are sold in the gift shop, then given to the train’s conductor when the rider is seated on the train, prior to the train ride commencing.

The train operates May to September, Saturdays and Sundays, 10 am to 4 pm. They do special rides for special occasions.





## ALASKA FISH & LUMBER CO., SHAKAN



(images submitted by J.W. Terrill)

From Alaska Department of Commerce website: [www.commerce.alaska.gov/dera/DCRAExternal/Community/Details](http://www.commerce.alaska.gov/dera/DCRAExternal/Community/Details):

“Shakan was the summer village of the Henya tribe of the Tlingit Indians, who came here for fish eggs. The Shakan Post Office was established in 1886 and closed in 1936. In 1893 the U.S. Census Bureau reported that the village had a population of 38 and included a sawmill and about 12 houses. In 1938 only one person was reported living there. Shakan is currently uninhabited.”

Another popular collectible with Alaskan collectors are salmon cans and salmon can labels. Obviously, the unused labels are easier to deal with. It is unusual to find a can with label in decent condition.

Alaska Fish & Lumber Co. operated from 1901 to 1905 when the name changed to Shakan Salmon Co. They produced Arena Brand Salmon, Choice Medium Red (among other brands, I assume). Cool Gladiator, don't you think?

Shakan Lumber & Trading (1893-1897) pre-dates the Alaska Fish & Lumber Co.





# ALASKA EXPLORATION COMPANY



There was just not enough room to bring you this in last month's issue. Above is the interior of the A.E. Co. in Dawson. At right is an ad from the July 27, 1899 issue of the San Francisco Call. And below is a metal sign about the size of a car license plate, multi-colored in red, light blue, gold and black.



OCEAN TRAVEL.  
FIRST STEAMER FOR  
**Cape Nome** Gold Fields,  
Golovin and St. Michael,  
Connecting With River Boats For  
**DAWSON**  
And All Points on the TUKON RIVER.  
THE ALASKA EXPLORATION CO.  
Will Dispatch the Steamer  
**HOMER,**  
HIGGINS, Master.  
From Spear Street Wharf.  
FRIDAY, July 28th, at 3 P. M.  
For Passage and Freight Rates Apply at  
Once at Company's Office, 129 Post St.  
THE ALASKA EXPLORATION CO.



We just discovered that this time check was reported in "The Numismatist," March 1905, reported by B.P. Wright, MD, with the same number! Dr. Wright was the president of the ANA from 1902 to 1905.



## H.B.C. “MADE BEAVERS”

Below is transcribed a letter that was sold on eBay, from the Hudson’s Bay Co. It was an old mimeo (spirit duplicator, blue ink), apparently made in some quantity to answer questions about the tokens. This is probably circa 1940s or 1950s. Parts are illegible.



“The largest of these four brass coins represented one Made-Beaver, the unit of currency used in the fur trade for many decades. It was equal in value to the skin of an adult male beaver in prime condition. The other three represent 1/2, 1/4 and 1/8 made-beaver.

“Before these brass tokens came into use, a made-beaver was represented by a stick, a porcupine quill, an ivory disc, a musket ball, or anything else agreed upon between trader and trapper. The trapper would bring his furs to the trading post, and the trader would value them in terms of made-beaver. About 1900, a large beaver skin was worth 12 made-beaver. If the total value of the trapper amounted to 12 made-beaver, the trader would hand him 95 units of the currency agreed upon, and with these he would make his purchases from the trading post. In 1742(?), a beaver would buy 3/4(?) lb. coloured beads, 1½ lbs. powder, 5 lbs. shot, 8 knives, 1/2 yd. broadcloth, ? lbs. tobacco, and so forth; while guns with a 4 foot barrel would cost 12 made-beavers.

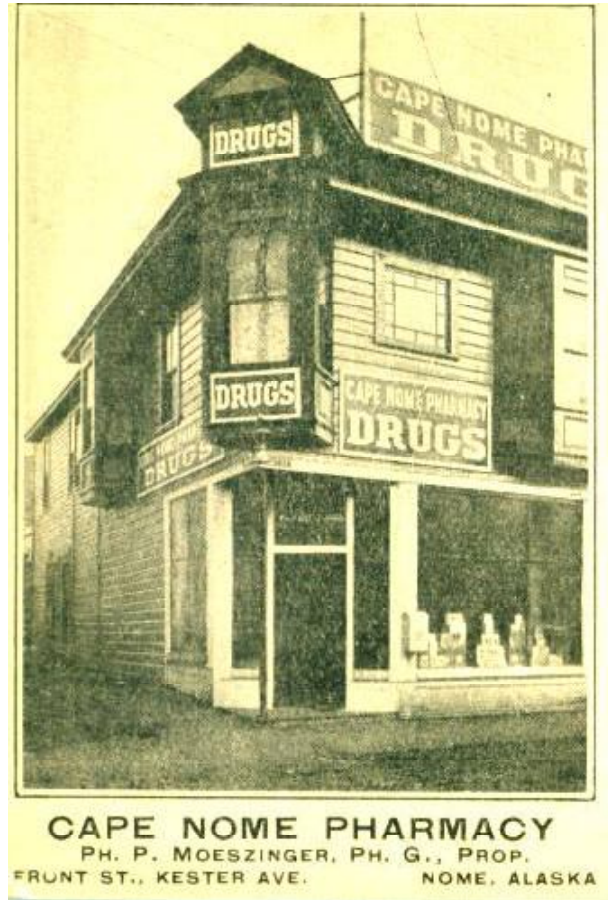
“The coins were designed by George Simpson McTavish of Albany Fort in 1854. The design was sent London with the letters MB joined as the HB, thus MB (ed note: showing the letters joined together on the flat edges). but the die cutter interpreted the monogram as the letters N B joined by mistake, so N B went on the coins. E M stands for East Main, the district on the East Mainland of Hudson Bay.

“The tokens were still in use in some districts as late as 1910, when they were valued at about fifty cents. The North West Company also employed a beaver token, specimens of which are now very rare.”

## CAPE NOME PHARMACY



A rare token sold by Kaye Dethridge (see Prices Realized). And a neat post card (Candy Waugaman, I think).



## GOLD DUST AS CURRENCY

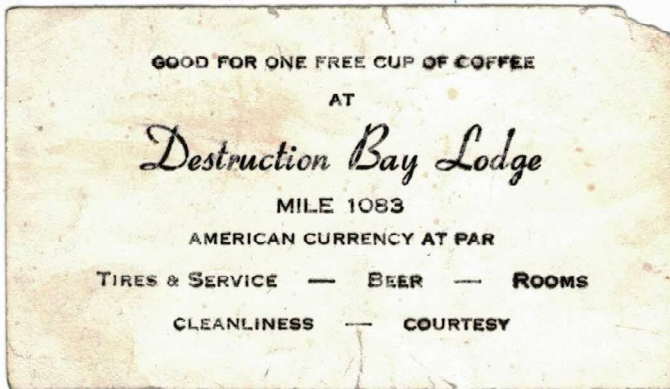
From “Rand McNally Guide to Alaska and Yukon,” reporting on a trip down the Yukon River (1922).

“We soon pass the mouth of the Koyukuk River. Steamers of light draft take supplies to the far distant placer camp which is in the Arctic Circle. This has been known as the Koyukuk country and has been a good producer. In fact, it has always been a self-sustaining camp, no money from the outside being needed in its development, taking at all times enough gold dust out to run itself. Very little if any outside money or “Cheechako Money” as silver, gold, or paper is called, being used in the camp. Gold dust is the common medium of exchange.

## FOR THE RECORD



**DAWSON, YT:** A. Smith, Palace Cigar Store, bifa-cial. Finally! A nice example!



**DESTRUCTION BAY, YT:** Destruction Bay Lodge, good for one free cup of coffee. Black on white card, 88mm by 51mm.

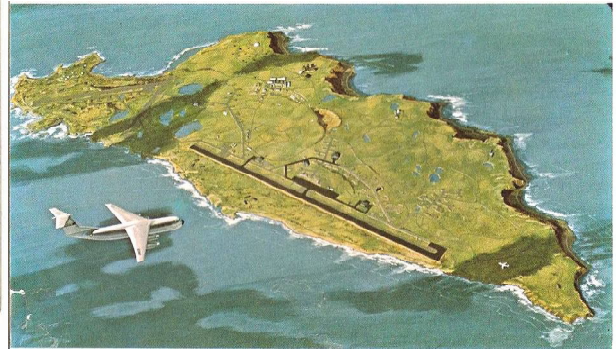


**(FAIRBANKS):** U.S.O. Must Not Go. White on red pin back button. I have a vague memory of the campaign to keep the USO on First Ave. , circa 1980? The Fairbanks Coin Club used to hold meetings and shows there (before I arrived in 1974). I think the campaign succeeded, temporarily. Golden Heart Plaza and a parking lot for the new court house occupy the old USO location. I have a few of these available for \$5.

## SHEMYA ISLAND



Shemya Island and Eareckson Air Station have been in the news lately.



The first mention was of a Delta Air Lines flight from China to Seattle making an emergency stop “due to a potential engine issue.” Shemya is used as an Air Force refueling hub and a diversion airport for civilian aircraft. It is also part of our missile defense.

Being the conspiracy nut that I am, I wonder who the CIA or NSA picked up in China and had to drop off at Shemya.



In the second mention of Shemya, it is reported that the Cobra Dane radar will receive a \$70 million upgrade.

Air Force Space Command states that Cobra Dane can track 120 objects simultaneously. It faces Russia’s Kamchatka Peninsula and the Kura Test Range.